

John W. McConnell

October 18, 1907 — February 19, 1997

John W. McConnell will always be remembered at Cornell as a Professor of Industrial and Labor Relations from 1946, just a year after the establishment of the School. He was a former Dean of the Graduate School (1955-59) and was Dean of the School of Industrial and Labor Relations (1959-63). He was highly regarded in both roles.

The first member of his family to receive a higher education, he received a Bachelor's degree from Dickinson College in 1929 and a Ph.D. degree in Sociology from Yale University in 1937. Years later, he received honorary degrees from his alma mater and from the University of Rhode Island.

In 1943, he published *The Basic Teachings of the Great Economists*, New York: Garden City Publications (reissued in 1947 and 1956). In the School of Industrial and Labor Relations, he was a member of the Department of Labor Economics and Income Security, a perfect combination for his broad ranging interests in the sociology and economics for America's social classes and their needs and interests.

From 1946 until his death, he lived in Trumansburg. There he and his wife, Harriet Barlow McConnell, raised their four daughters and one son in their formative years. Active as he was with his university duties, John always found time to spend with the children at home or away on camping trips.

When the Whytes came to Cornell in 1948 and the McConnells were away for a camping trip, they offered their home for a few days until the mover's truck arrived with their belongings. That was typical of the McConnell's generosity with friends and neighbors.

The McConnells were actively involved in the life of the village, especially in the Methodist Church. John was also a member of Rotary International in Trumansburg. John served on the Trumansburg Board of Education from 1958-61. He was also a member of the Board of Directors of the Tompkins Community Hospital from 1980-94.

In addition to his university duties, John was highly regarded as an arbitrator and much sought after by both parties in disputes for his probing questions and fair minded decisions.

In addition to his book on the great economists, he published a study on *The Evolution of Social Classes* (1942) Washington, D.C., American Council on Public Affairs.

In his many years at Cornell, John focused his research interests on the social and economic needs of our older citizens. He was an outstanding contributor to the academic literature on gerontology at an early stage when scholars were just beginning to give attention to this field. As co-author with John J. Corson, he published *Economic Needs of Older People* (1956) New York, Twentieth Century Fund.

John McConnell left Cornell in 1963 to become President of the University of New Hampshire, where he served until 1971. During his tenure, the state university added a School of Business and Economics and a School of Health Studies, and constructed a modern complex to house the New England Center for Continuing Education. The university carried on a 40-million-dollar expansion of its facilities to accommodate an 80 percent increase in student enrollment. McConnell Hall, which houses offices and classrooms of the School of Business, serves as a permanent tribute to his endeavors.

The McConnells returned to retire in their Trumansburg home. John continued to be active in scholarly work and in arbitration cases until his health began to fail.

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